

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT MANILA 4366 ACTION STATE MAR 17.

QUOTE NCLAS MANILA 4366

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO EXIM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, EFIN, RP, EALR

SUBJ: SEISMIC CONSIDERATIONS AT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT SITE

1. SUMMARY: LOCAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS HAVE DETERMINED THAT SEISMIC CONSIDERATIONS OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANT DESIGN HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY EVALUATED AND WILL ISSUE RENEWAL OF LIMITED WORK AUTHORIZATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR PLANT IN BATAAN. END SUMMARY.

2. A PART OF THE CONTROVERSY OF THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS SURROUNDING THE WESTINGHOUSE NUCLEAR POWER PROJECT HAS FOCUSED ON SEISMIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GENERAL ADVISABILITY OF SITING A NUCLEAR REACTOR NEAR A FAULT LINE. THIS
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STEMMED IN PART FROM A LOCAL REVIEW BY THE PHILIPPINE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION (PAEC) OF THE EBASCO PRELIMINARY SITE INVESTIGATION REPORT (PSIR) TO DETERMINE IF A POSSIBLE FAULT DISCOVERED BY INDEPENDENT LOCAL GEOLOGISTS LYING OFFSHORE OF THE SITE IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA HAD BEEN ADEQUATELY CONSIDERED IN THE REACTOR DESIGN.

3. WESTINGHOUSE AND EBASCO ENGINEERS ARE CONFIDENT THAT ALL SEISMIC FEATURES HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY ACCOUNTED FOR IN THE DESIGN. INDEED, THE SEISMIC QUESTION WAS REVIEWED IN DETAIL IN THE WAKE OF THE MINDANAO EARTHQUAKE IN SEPTEMBER 1976 AND THE SEISMIC DATA AND DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS THOROUGHLY RESTUDIED.

4. THE "FAULT" IN QUESTION WAS CONSIDERED BY EBASCO GEOLOGISTS TO BE A SLUMP FEATURE" IN THEIR ANALYSIS AND WAS SO DESCRIBED IN THE PSIR. HOWEVER, INDEPENDENT LOCAL GEOLOGISTS HAD A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION. TO RESOLVE THIS QUESTION, AND CLEAR THE WAY FOR A RENEWAL OF THE LIMITED WORK AUTHORIZATION FOR THE NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION BY THE REGULATORY AGENCY, THE PAEC, EBASCO ENGINEERS RETURNED TO THE PHILIPPINES THE WEEK OF MARCH 6-10 WITH THEIR RAW SEISMIC DATA COLLECTED AT THE TIME THE PSIR WAS DONE IN 1975 AND 1976.

5. THE PAEC, ITS LOCAL GEOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS, AND IAEA ADVISOR, AFTER REVIEWING THIS RAW DATA, NOW CONCUR IN EBASCO'S ANALYSIS THAT THE FEATURE, SLUMP OR FAULT, WILL NOT AFFECT THE PLANT EARTHQUAKE FACTOR AND THAT THE PRESENT DESIGN IS WITHIN SAFE EARTHQUAKE LIMITS. THE IAEA HAS BEEN ASKED TO SEND A TEAM OF INDEPENDENT SEISMIC EXPERTS IN MAY TO CONFIRM LOCAL FINDINGS. THE OPINION OF UNCLASSIFIED

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A PRIVATE JAPANESE SEISMOLOGIST IS ALSO BEING SOUGHT. ACCORDING TO PAEC COMMISSIONER THE INTENT IS TO DISPEL CRITICISM BY ALL PARTIES CONCERNING THE SEISMIC QUESTION, AND SPECIFICALLY TO ANSWER THE REPORT OF THE UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS REGARDING THIS MATTER.

6. COMMISSIONER IBE HAS INFORMED EMBOFF THAT HE NOW SEES NO REASON NOT TO EXTEND THE CURRENT LIMITED WORK AUTHORIZATION (LWA). HE VIEWS LOCAL CONDITIONS AS GOOD AND DOES NOT FORESEE ANY REASON TO STOP THE CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE FOR REGULATORY PURPOSES. ANOTHER LWA WILL BE ISSUED, RATHER THAN A FINAL CONSTRUCTION PERMIT BECAUSE THERE ARE MORE SAFETY REQUIREMENT ISSUES IN THE WESTINGHOUSE STILL TO BE ANALYZED BY THE PAEC. THE COMMISSIONER ALSO SEES WITHHOLDING OF THE FINAL CONSTRUCTION PERMIT AS A REGULATORY CARROT TO ASSURE WESTINGHOUSE COMPLIANCE WITH WHAT IT PROMISED IN THE PSAR.AR. NEWSOM UNQUOTE VANCE

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